

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are currently pending in the application. Through this Reply, claims 1, 10, 17, and 19 have been amended. No claims have been added or canceled. Accordingly, following the entry of this reply, claims 1-21 will be pending in the present application. Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and following remarks.

The 35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

Claims 1-21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent Application Publication 2004/0003261A1 to Hayashi (hereinafter referred to as "Hayashi") in view of US Patent Application Publication 2002/0161721A1 to Yuan, et al. (hereinafter "Yuan").

Independent claim 1 has been amended to more clearly point out the claimed invention. Claim 1, as amended, is directed to a method for electronically signing an electronic transcript, comprising: (a) obtaining an electronic transcript comprising a plurality of pages, one of said pages to have a signature therein certifying the accuracy of the transcript; (b) obtaining a signature image; (c) obtaining signature location information including at least one of a page number and a line number within the transcript where said signature image is to appear; (d) incorporating said signature image into the electronic transcript; (e) associating said signature image with said signature location information; (f) performing a modification detection operation on the electronic transcript to generate a representation of the contents of the electronic transcript; (g) providing for the recording and time stamping by a digital notary service of the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript; (h) obtaining a notary record from the digital notary service of the time stamping; (i) digitally signing the notary record; and (j) forming an electronically signed electronic transcript by bundling the digitally signed notary record with the electronic transcript.

It is submitted that the cited references, alone or in combination, do not render claim 1 obvious. Hayashi is directed to a signature verification system and method in which signature data is encrypted and decrypted and hash values for the signature data are compared to verify that transmitted data represents the actual signature. The Office Action asserts that Hayashi

discloses an electronic transcript at paragraph no. [0095], with reference to Fig. 17. It is respectfully submitted that this portion of Hayashi does not disclose an electronic transcript as claimed. As discussed above, claim 1 requires obtaining an electronic transcript comprising a plurality of pages, one of said pages to have a signature therein certifying the accuracy of the transcript. Claim 1 further requires, for example, obtaining signature location information including at least one of a page number and a line number within the transcript where said signature image is to appear. The noted portions of Hayashi discloses a signature input image that is sent to an image coding unit that applies coding parameters to the image data. This disclosure is consistent with other disclosure of Hayashi, where image data is processed. However, at no point does Hayashi describe a transcript comprising a plurality of pages, one of said pages to have a signature therein certifying the accuracy of the transcript. Because Hayashi does not disclose a transcript as claimed, Hayashi also cannot contain any disclosure of a combination of elements as claimed, including incorporating said signature image into the electronic transcript; associating said signature image with said signature location information; performing a modification detection operation on the electronic transcript to generate a representation of the contents of the electronic transcript; providing for the recording and time stamping by a digital notary service of the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript; obtaining a notary record from the digital notary service of the time stamping; digitally signing the notary record; and forming an electronically signed electronic transcript by bundling the digitally signed notary record with the electronic transcript.

Yuan does not solve the deficiencies of Hayashi. Yuan is directed to creating a record of a transaction that may be used to verify such a transaction. In paragraph [0037] to [0040], for example, Yuan describes verification of contents of a record. Yuan does not describe, however, obtaining an electronic transcript comprising a plurality of pages, one of said pages to have a signature therein certifying the accuracy of the transcript, as required by claim 1. Claim 1 further requires, for example, obtaining signature location information including at least one of a page number and a line number within the transcript where said signature image is to appear, which is likewise not disclosed by Yuan. Accordingly, neither Yuan, nor the combination of Yuan and Hayashi, discloses a transcript as claimed. Therefore, the references, alone or in combination, also cannot contain any disclosure of a combination of elements as claimed, including

incorporating said signature image into the electronic transcript; associating said signature image with said signature location information; performing a modification detection operation on the electronic transcript to generate a representation of the contents of the electronic transcript; providing for the recording and time stamping by a digital notary service of the representation of the contents of the electronic transcript; obtaining a notary record from the digital notary service of the time stamping; digitally signing the notary record; and forming an electronically signed electronic transcript by bundling the digitally signed notary record with the electronic transcript.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the cited references. Independent claims 10, 17, and 19 contain limitations similar as described for claim 1, and are similarly allowable for at least the same reasons as described with respect to claim 1.

Each of claims 2-9, 11-16, 18, and 20-21 is a dependent claim that depends either directly or indirectly from one of independent claims 1, 10, 17, and 19. Consequently, each of these dependent claims is at least allowable for the reasons noted with respect to the independent claim from which it depends. However, each of these dependent claims may be allowable for additional reasons, and the applicant reserves the right to assert any such reason in the future.

Authorization to Charge Fees

No claim related fees are believed to be due with this response. In the event any such fees are due, please debit Deposit Account 08-2623. In the event that a petition for extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136(a) is required to have this reply considered and such a petition does not otherwise accompany this reply, please consider this a petition for an extension of time for the required number of months and authorization to debit Deposit Account 08-2623 for the required fee.

Conclusion

The application now appearing to be in form for allowance, reconsideration and allowance thereof is respectfully requested. If a telephone conversation will further the prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

HOLLAND & HART LLP

By: 

Kenneth C. Winterton
Registration No. 48,040
P.O. Box 8749
Denver, Colorado 80201-8749
(303) 473-2700, x2717

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